

Society Notes

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A Linton institution: The Railway Hotel



The Railway Hotel in Sussex Street is one of Linton's enduring institutions which has provided a place for people to meet and socialise since the mid-nineteenth century. The photo above is of Sussex Street, looking north, with the hotel on the right. It is the earliest photo the Historical Society has of the hotel. It was probably taken in about 1904-5, although the exact date is uncertain. This is the same building that is standing today, but without the veranda which was added later.

The pub's popularity has increased in recent times through its provision of a range of hearty bar and dining room meals, and its musical Sunday Blues afternoons. In this issue of *Society Notes*, we include a history of the early years of the Railway Hotel.

Also in this issue:

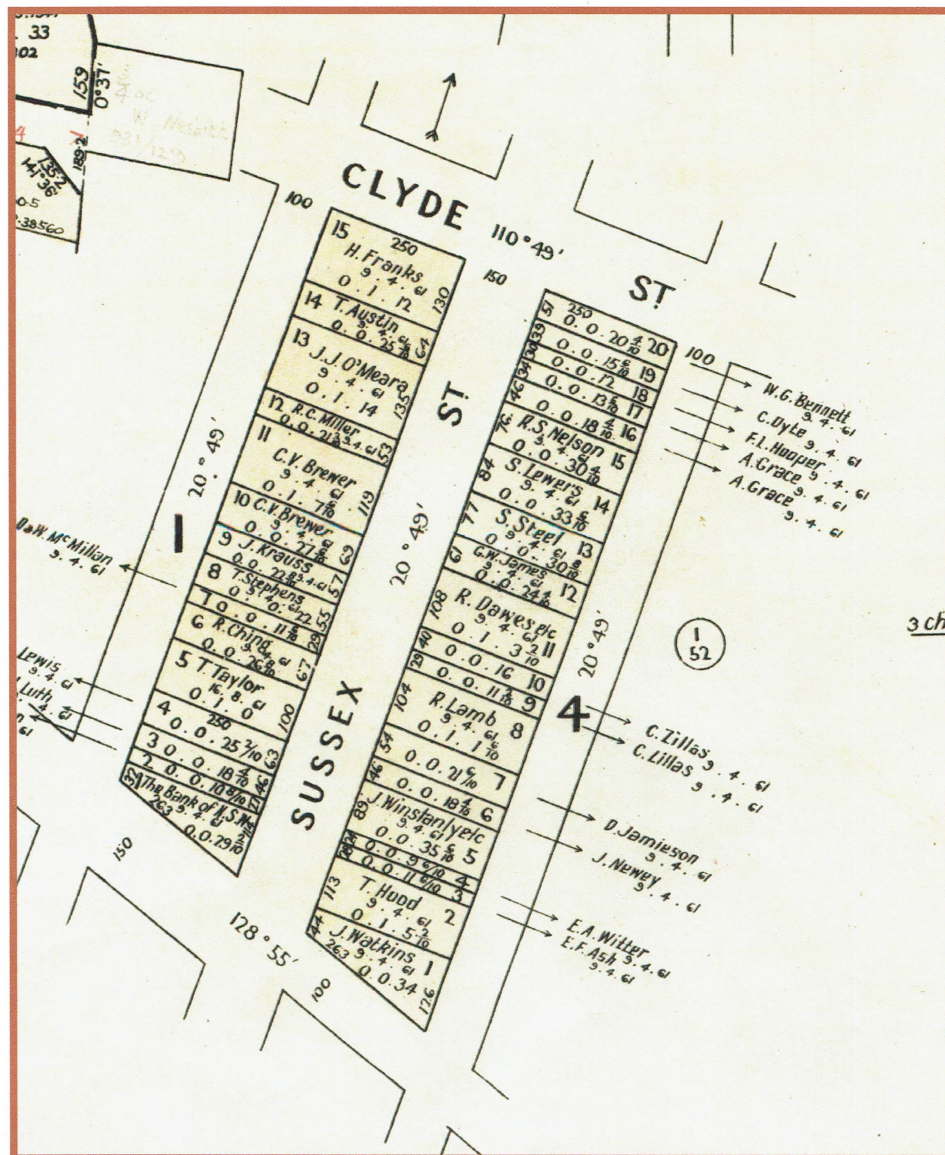
- Max Kerr returns!
- Clunes successful Book Town reinvention – our March History Night
- ANZAC Day Wreath

An Early History of the Railway Hotel, Linton

A recent request for information about when the Railway Hotel was built prompted us to do some research in our archives regarding this well-known Linton building. The following is what we have found about the hotel's history up to the early twentieth century.

The exact date of the construction of the present Railway Hotel building, at 71-73 Sussex St Linton, has always been something of a mystery. Historical Society documents are not exact, and nineteenth-century photographs are non-existent.

We know that, according to the Certificate of Title, the hotel is on allotment 14 and 'part allotment 15' in Section 4 of the township plan of Linton. The first owner of allotment 14 was Samuel Lewers (manager of the Bank of New South Wales), and the first owner of allotment 15 was Robert Simeon Nelson (undertaker). These allotments were purchased when blocks of land in the newly surveyed town were sold in 1861. Presumably Robert Nelson decided to sell on half of his allotment and retain the other half.



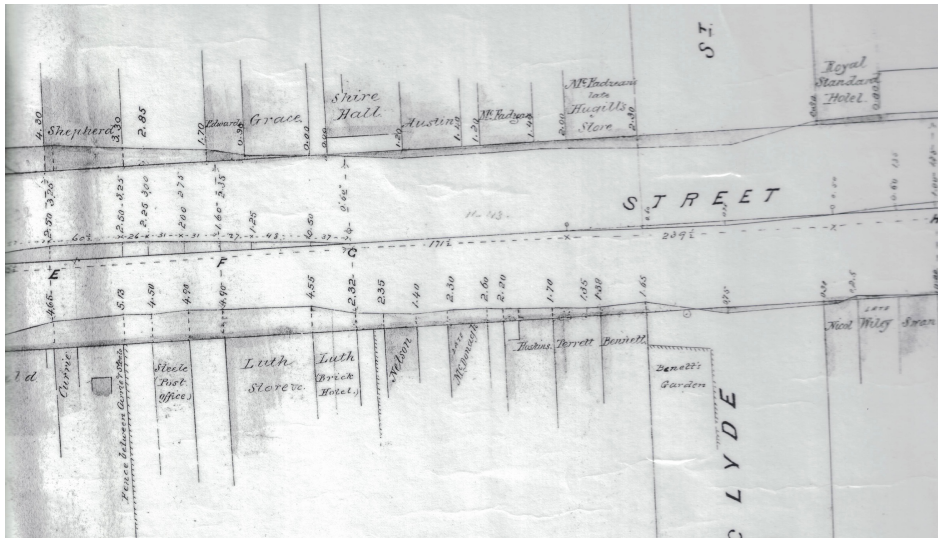
Map of original owners of town allotments in Sussex St Linton drawn up by Surveyor Cape Webster in 1861.

It is not clear who the next owners of this land were. According to Linton's 1939 centenary history, 'Brewer's store was built on the site of the present Railway Hotel', and Brewer already had a 'large store' at this site when

the land was surveyed.¹ However, the 1861 Surveyor's Plan of Town Lots shows C V Brewer having Lots 10 and 11 in Section 1 on the opposite side of Sussex St, so this seems unlikely.

Also on the 1861 Surveyor's Plan of Town Lots, there is Henry Luth who has allotment 3 in Section 1, a small block two doors up from the first Bank of New South Wales on the corner of Gillespie St.

At some point Henry Luth bought allotment 14, Section 4, from Samuel Lewers. Luth's Store and Luth's Hotel appear next to Nelson's property on the plan of Sussex Street drawn up by the Shire Surveyor John Montgomery in August 1871. The store and hotel are shown as adjacent but separate buildings, and the hotel is described as a 'brick hotel'.



Location of Luth's store and hotel in plan of Sussex St in 1871 by Surveyor John Montgomery

This would have happened sometime during the 1860s, since Luth is listed as a storekeeper at 'Lintons' in the Glenfine Gold Mine share registry in 1865, and as a hotelkeeper in Sussex Street in a postal directory published in 1868.²

A Victorian Heritage Database report says that the Railway Hotel is unusual for not being situated on a street corner, explained by its 'origin as Luth's store'. The Heritage Database report says that Luth's original building is still situated at the rear of the present hotel.³

This information about the whereabouts of the original building was contradicted by Letty Armstrong in a 1993 letter to an enquirer, in which she says the original store was first moved to the rear of the premises, then to the Linton Railway Station and then to Berrybank (where it burned down.)

It is understood that Henry Luth moved with his family to Echuca about 1868, and the hotel was then run by Henry's brother-in-law Eugene O'Sullivan (Eugene's wife Susan was the sister of Henry's wife Rose). Eugene O'Sullivan had previously been a hotelkeeper in Ballarat. In 1871 he purchased the business (and land?) from Henry Luth for the sum of £2491.14.4.⁴ It then became 'O'Sullivan's Hotel' – Eugene is mentioned as the licensee of 'O'Sullivan's Hotel, Linton' in reports in the *Ballarat Star* in 1875 and 1877.⁵

Eugene O'Sullivan died in January 1879. In 1880, his widow Susan married Peter McCuskey, who had been managing the hotel since Eugene's death.⁶

After he and Susan married the hotel was known as 'McCuskey's Hotel'. Peter McCuskey is mentioned as the licensee of the hotel in reports in the *Ballarat Star* in 1882 and 1883, and in 1888.⁷ The McCuskey family moved to Melbourne around 1890.

The next licensee was John Burt Graham and this is when the hotel was given the name 'Railway Hotel'. The hotel is mentioned as 'Graham's Railway Hotel' in *Ballarat Star* reports in 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894.⁸

¹ *Historic Souvenir of the Linton Centenary 1839-1939*, compiled by H P Bennett, p. 16,

² Glenfine Gold Mine share registry, 1865; photocopy of a postal directory, 1868

³ www.vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au

⁴ *In search of Great-Grandmama: looking for Susan O'Neill*, by descendant Jenny Craig.

⁵ *Ballarat Star* December 1875 and 1877.

⁶ *In search of Great-Grandmama: looking for Susan O'Neill*, by descendant Jenny Craig.

⁷ *Ballarat Star*, December 1882, 1883 and 1888.

⁸ *Ballarat Sta*, December 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893 and 1894.

The change of name to the Railway Hotel coincided with the letting of contracts to extend the railway line from Scarsdale to Linton in 1889.⁹

It is not known if JB Graham ever owned the hotel building. Ownership was transferred to James Coghlan, a Ballarat brewer, in June 1894, and then to Coghlan and Tulloch's Ballarat Brewing Company in 1896. This company and related companies appear to have owned the building until 1959.¹⁰

JB Graham died in July 1896.¹¹ His widow Catherine (née Dalton) continued to manage the hotel until around 1901. 'Mrs Graham's Railway Hotel' was referred to in a notice in the *Ballarat Star* in May 1901.

The hotel was then run by Mr T. Hession 1902-1904, and Mr P. Campbell 1904.¹² Mr Campbell was the licensee until about 1907.

In the *Ballarat Star* 23 December 1902, tenders were called for the purchase and removal of wooden buildings at the Railway Hotel, Linton, so it seems likely that, at this time, some of the original timber building was about to be replaced by the current brick structure. What happened to the original 'brick hotel' of 1861 is not known – perhaps it might have been incorporated into the new brick building.

In a 1993 letter to an enquirer our then Secretary, Letty Armstrong, gave the date 1903 for the construction of the brick building, however it is not known where she found this information. Handwritten information in the Graham family file (writer unknown) says the present hotel was rebuilt in 1905-06.

A legal dispute about payment for 'repair work' at the Railway Hotel at Linton was reported in the *Ballarat Star* 23 July 1904. James Laughlin, a builder, had sub-contracted cement work and plastering and then not paid for all of it. This suggests building work was carried out c.1903-04.

The photograph of the hotel in the LDHS collection that appears in *Linton: A Photographic History*, and which we have here on our front page, shows a brick building without a veranda. We dated this photo early 1900s because it also shows James Nelson as the proprietor of the Nelson family's undertaker's business (further north in the photo), which James took over in 1901.

It is not known precisely when the veranda was added but it can be seen on the building in a photo taken in the 1920s.



Railway Hotel with veranda added, 1920s. On the left is the Linton Public Library and Nelsons Undertakers building, recently remodelled at this time in a 'Californian Bungalow' style.

After 1907, our records are not consistent as to licensees of the hotel. If any of our members can fill us in on who was licensee and when, we would very much appreciate your feedback! Please write to us at: enquiries@lintonhistory.org.au

⁹ *Rails to Linton and Skipton*, Michael Menzies, 2016, p. 6.

¹⁰ See photocopy of Certificate of Title in file at LDHS.

¹¹ Reported in *Ballarat Star* 21 July 1896.

¹² *Ballarat Star*, December 1902, February 1903, and April 1904.

ANZAC Day Commemoration

This year the Linton ANZAC Day ceremony was again organised by the Linton Primary School and was held at the War Memorial in front of the Shire Offices. The Historical Society laid a wreath, and our thanks to our member Deirdre Nicol for organising this, and to member Monica O'Keefe for attending the ceremony and laying the wreath.



Photo: Monica Keefe

Join Geelong & South Western Rail Heritage Society's celebration of Christmas in July. Heritage train ride & lunch - open fire and warming food, at the historic Birregurra Railway Station

Saturday 21 July 2018. The historic Birregurra Railway Station was constructed of Portarlington brick in 1877, with brick extensions added around 1890. It has French doors and open fire places and a veranda along the passenger platform supported by cast iron posts. Restoration works have been carried out over the past two decades and are ongoing.

Travel there and back by 1930 vintage Diesel Electric Rail Motor (DERM) from Melbourne or Geelong and enjoy four hours at Birregurra Station. Relax in front of warming open fire whilst you enjoy a two course hot dinner with drinks.

TOUR DETAILS: The DERM will depart from Southern Cross station at approximately 9.30 am, pick up at Lara (if required - approx. 10 30) and North Shore (if required - approx. 10 40) and depart Geelong approx. 10.50 am. Enjoy cruising through the pleasant countryside surrounded by the polished interior woodwork and the sound of a quaint 75 year old rail motor humming its way back in time to Birregurra, arriving there around 12 Noon.

Be welcomed into the historic station building with a complimentary drink, a warming open fire and a hot two course roast dinner and desert. Additional drinks may be purchased from a cash bar at moderate prices.

At 4 pm, you will board the DERM for a relaxing ride home without having to be concerned about driving. Return to Geelong will be at approximately 5 pm and 6.25 pm at Southern Cross, with set down stops at North Shore and Lara if requested).

Bookings are to be made online at: www.trybooking.com/VKHB Adult \$146, Concession \$139, Child \$130. (Fare includes rail travel, complementary drink on arrival, two course meal and tea/coffee).

ENQUIRIES: Phone Michael Menzies on 0419 546 251, between 7.00pm and 9.30pm weeknights or email geelongrailheritage@gmail.com

History Night Guest speaker tells how Clunes has prospered as Booktown

With the decline of many small rural towns such as Linton, stories about how some towns have successfully reinvented themselves is an emerging topic in our rural Australian history. Clunes has done this successfully with its Booktown theme.

Graeme Johnstone, part of the original Creative Clunes team of 4 people, spoke to our members and friends at our 5 March History Night about the transformation of this small town in decline to a booming 'Book Town', with suggestions regarding how a town like Linton might go about a similar transformation.



Question time at the February History Night with Graeme Johnstone

Photo D Hopkins

Graeme explained how the team came up with the idea of a book town in the first instance. Although there were other Book Towns around the world, there were none in the Southern Hemisphere. Graeme stressed that the working group of four realised that they needed to get the support of the Clunes community for their idea, so they gathered leaders of the various community groups (approximately 40) in town together to discuss it.

With the support of these groups, the working group personally approached all the second-hand bookshops in Victoria and asked them if they would like to have a stall at the first Book Town event in 2007. There was to be no cost for the sites and free accommodation for the first 16 sites taken. They got 53 booksellers at this first Book Town and 900 people attended on the day.

In 2008, they decided to make it a two-day event and this time the attendance was 11,000 people. In the early days entry was free but now an entry fee is charged and also a site fee. The festival has boomed since then, with other cultural events added over the years, for example, a Ceramics Award, and Opera in the gardens. The festival has revitalised the town and

There are 6 or 7 permanent book shops in the town and all the shops in Clunes now sell books relating to what they sell. Clunes has become a cultural hub and a tourist destination, the first international Book Town in the Southern Hemisphere. It receives support from Federation University in collecting data over the Book Town weekend and from La Trobe University in analysing that data. Importantly, it now receives funding from the State Government through Creative Victoria. Graeme maintained that the re-opening of the Maryborough Rail Line was a direct result of the success of Book Town. This makes travel to and from Melbourne easier and has resulted in many Melburnians settling in Clunes and commuting to work in the city.

Graeme's advice for any small town wanting to reinvent itself is to first find something it is really passionate about that is different from other places. You will need 'can do' people to drive the idea and the support of the local community for that idea.

Next History Night

Monday 18 June 2018, 7:30pm, in the Shire Offices.

By Popular Demand: Max Kerr is returning with more objects from our colonial past



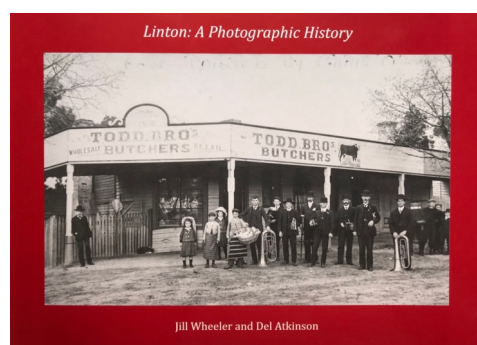
Max Kerr and the audience at our February 2017 History Night

Members will recall that last year Max Kerr provided a fascinating night for all when he presented and talked about a range of objects from his vast collection of rare and long-forgotten farm and household objects.

Max's talk was so popular that we have invited him to make a new presentation, with a new array of objects from his collection.

Not to be missed!

Visitors welcome. Supper will be served at the end of the evening (please bring a plate to share).



***Linton: A Photographic History* is available at the Shire Offices, the café *Wares, Plants 'n Things* in Sussex St, and the Historical Society for \$30.00 (plus \$12 postage and handling if required). To order: en - quiries@lintonhiistory.org.au**

the Bulletin board

- **Next Open Days at the Resource Centre** – the second Sunday of the month: 10 June, then a two months winter break, then open again on Sunday 9 September. Opening times: **2:00 – 5:00 pm**.
- **Our next History Night: Monday 18 June, Shire Offices, Sussex Street. Topic: Max Kerr returns to present more objects from our colonial past**
- **Annual General Meeting on Monday 17 September. Speaker: Margaret Anderson, from the Old Treasury Building who will examine and discuss what historical objects can tell us about how people lived.**
- Donations to the Society are **tax deductible**. Please contact the Treasurer for details.
- Lots of information is on our website www.lintonhistory.org.au and like us on www.facebook.com/lintonhistory



Publications:

- **DVDs of History Night talks are available: Jim Stapleton; the O'Beirne family; Bruce Adams; Aaron Kerr; Rod Lewers; Chris and Bill Grigg; Joan Hunt (two talks); Hans and Gerry Ver Doorn; Graeme Ellis; Chris Uren on the Kvapil/Hayward family and the Snake Valley Displaced persons camp. \$10 each + \$5 postage and handling. Contact Joan Giles: joangiles@hemsleypark.com.au Tel: 5309 1770.**
- ***Linton Makes History: an Australian Goldfields Town and its Past*** On sale at the Shire Office, and at *Wares Plants, 'n Things* in Sussex St. Or buy direct from the author Jill Wheeler – jillianleawheeler@gmail.com - email Jill for electronic banking transfer details or send a cheque for \$30.00, plus \$8.00 postage & handling, to Linton & District Historical Society, PO Box 41, Linton 3360.
- ***Linton: A Photographic History*** A history of the small gold rush town of Linton as told through selected photographs from the collection of the Linton and District Historical Society. \$30.00, plus \$12.00 postage & handling. Email: enquiries@lintonhistory.org.au to order.
- ***A Walk-Drive Tour of Linton* Currently out of print, and a new edition is in the planning stage.**
- ***Society Notes* is a quarterly publication. The next issue will be August 2018.**

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Applause: A Big Thank You to all our Donors

Donations to the Society are **tax deductible** (receipts issued on request), many of our members have responded generously to assist us with new projects for preserving and displaying our precious collection of artefacts, photographs and documents. If you would like to make a donation, please contact our Treasurer, Jan Cooke (5342 8554).